New Books.

An Inquiry into the Difference of Style observable in ancient Glass Paintings, with Hints on Glass Painting. By an AMATEUR. Oxford. Parker. 1847.

THIS work cannot fail to have a considerable effect on the beautiful art of which it treats, and should be carefully studied by all who are in any way interested in its progress or application. The antiquary, the artist, the glass painter, and the general reader, must alike admit the value of this book, which has made clear and consecutive what before was scattered and confused, and is evidently the result of many years of personal examination, study, and comparison. It is only occasionally that we feel called on to speak in such unqualified terms of approval as we do in this case.

It consists of two handsome volumes, the second of which is devoted wholly to illustrations. The first volume comprises, after matter introductory, with many valuable notes, five sections discriminating the styles, for the classification of which the author adopts Mr. Rickman's architectural nomenclature; viz., early English, the decorated, perpendicular, cinque cento, and the intermediate. These constitute the first chapter. The second chapter is divided into three heads, on the "Employment of painted glass as a means of decoration," "On the true principles of glass painting," and "On the selection of a style." In various appendices are given a translation of parts of the *Diversarum Artium* of Theophilus (an excellent translation of which in full, by Mr. Hendrie, we recently mentioned), and various illustrative extracts from other old writers.

The following observations on the means by which the age of particular specimens of the art can be ascertained, are from the introduction, and will be found interesting:—

"In few branches of antiquarian research will a knowledge of minute details, and the consideration of internal evidence, be found more important than in this. It is seldom that the age of a glass painting is determined by the direct testimony of a date affixed to it, or of written documents; nor can a safe conclusion always be drawn from the situation which it occupies. It might at first be supposed that the glass would not be older than the window in which it is found, especially when the principal divisions of the picture or pattern coincide with the apertures of the window; but the inference from this circumstance cannot be relied upon, since instances are known in which windows have been constructed for the reception of glass older than themselves. It is therefore only from the internal evidence afforded by the work itself, that the date of a glass painting can in general be ascertained; and this evidence is not, as in a Gothic building, presented by a few prominent features, the contour of a moulding, for instance, or the form of a window, but by a variety of minute particulars, no one of which is perhaps adequate of itself to decide the question.

Some of these tests are peculiar to glass paintings, such as those afforded by the nature and texture of the material, its colour, and the mode of painting it. Some, again, it has in common with other objects; such as the character of the drawing, the form of the letters, the architectural details, the costume of the figures, the heraldic decorations, &c. All these features are not equally trustworthy; those derived from the general practice of the day, as regards the manufacture of the glass, and mode of painting it, are more to be relied on than those afforded by the nature of the particular subjects represented.

Each period of medieval glass painting has its distinctive style of execution, but artists were at all times prone to copy the designs of their predecessors. This may serve to account for the occasional representation in a glass painting, of the armour, costume, and architectural features of a period anterior to that of the work itself.

I shall now endeavour to shew more particularly the value of certain tests of date.

Mere *general arrangement* affords scarcely any criterion of date. The "*medallion window*" is perhaps confined to the Early English period; and designs extending themselves into more than one lower light of a window, can hardly be said to be earlier than the Decorated. But with these exceptions, almost every late arrangement is to be found more or less developed in the earlier styles.

The *general appearance* or *effect* of a glass painting is a feature deserving the utmost attention; but taken alone, it affords only a sure proof that the work belongs to some general period, without conveying a more definite idea of its date. The general effect of a glass painting depends indeed almost entirely on the quality and texture of the glass employed in it. Hence it varies according to the progressive changes in the manufacture of that material.

These, as might be expected, were so slow and gradual, as to be hardly perceptible; and glass, apparently of the same quality, was therefore employed during long periods of time. Owing to this circumstance, it becomes impossible to pronounce with certainty whether, for instance, an early glass painting, judging only from its general effect, is of the Early English, or early part of the Decorated period; whether another is late Decorated, or early Perpendicular; or whether to a third should be assigned a less general date than the space of time between the beginning of the fifteenth century, and the end of the reign of Henry VI., &c.

The execution of a glass painting according to any particular mode, the first invention of which is capable of being ascertained, raises a conclusive inference that the work cannot be earlier than a certain time; but seldom affords any other criterion of its date. So the representation in a glass painting of different ornaments, costumes, armour, and architectural details; the symbols of the alliance of families, or of individuals holding particular offices, serve in like manner to limit the antiquity of the work; without, however, at least in the generality of cases, setting any precise bounds to its lateness. Thus, for instance, the existence of the *yellow stain* in a glass painting, is a proof that it is not earlier than the fourteenth century. In like manner, a glass painting which exhibits *stippled shading*, or ruby glass having some of its coloured surface purposely abraded, may be pronounced not to be earlier than the fifteenth. Again, the use of *enamel colours* marks a glass painting as having been executed after the middle of the sixteenth century, while the trifling circumstance that the glass has been originally cut with *a diamond*, will denote that another work is not earlier than the seventeenth century. The representation in a glass painting of Decorated windows with flowing tracery, is an evidence that the picture was not painted until after the introduction of this feature in architecture. And the appearance of a shield bearing the private arms of a bishop impaled with those of his see, will in general raise a presumption that the work was executed during his prelacy."

We again cordially recommend to our readers this very interesting "Inquiry into the difference of style observable in ancient glass paintings," and give praise to Mr. Parker, the publisher, for the beautiful manner in which it is produced.

Correspondence.

CARDIFF COUNTY HALL COMPETITION.

SIR,—Your columns have had repeated remarks and suggestions for the improvement of architectural competition, but how can it be expected that such can be the case when some architects (not all) are the first cause of it themselves, as for instance, at this present time. An advertisement appeared in your columns inviting architects to submit designs for a new county hall, &c., at Cardiff, Glamorganshire, when from 30 to 40 sent in designs, and only about six approached the building wanted. Now the fact turns out that an architect was employed to draw out an advertisement for the town council, he himself, in conjunction with others, having sent in designs embracing all the accommodation, &c., required (differing from the vague advertisement he had drawn out). I would suggest that the different architects who have sent in designs should apply immediately for their designs and for a fresh competition, and to be furnished with the detailed particulars, to be drawn up by some responsible and respectable person.

I remain, Sir, &c.,

ONE OF THE COMPETITORS WHO HAS NOT SEEN THE SITE.

BATTERSEA PARK BUILDING SOCIETY.

SIR,—Had your correspondent "A Builder" applied to us, we would have afforded him every information in our power. Ere this, he has been informed that the tender of Mr. Burtenshaw has been accepted by the directors at their last meeting, July 8th.

The fact of the tenders being called by public advertisement, rendered caution on our part imperative, especially as the lower tenders were very much below our estimate 3,600*l.*, and the directors had reserved to themselves the right of accepting any tender. The directors meet but once a month, consequently a great deal of delay was necessary, in order that they should sanction our proceedings.

We furnish below the names of the parties tendering, and the amount of their tenders.

We are, Sir, your obedient servants,

THOMPSON AND MORGAN.

July 15th, 1847.

Costworth	£4,217
Cooper and Davis	4,200
Knible	4,140
Underhill	4,027
Todd	3,949
Mackrel	3,721
Burtenshaw	3,500
Pilbeam	3,479
Sandon	3,280
Share	2,880

PLASTERING ON CLAY WALLS.

Sir,—Referring to my journal of July, 1816, I find the following note:—"Almost all the houses between Maçon and Lyons are of earth or pisé, built in chests about 6 feet long, 3 feet high, and 2 feet thick, a layer of mortar 3 inches thick between each course, and also at the ends of the blocks. The roofs project at the *ends*, as well as at the sides, which has a very good effect. The tiles are double; this was, probably, the origin of the beautiful ornament on the monument of Lysicrates at Athens, and which is supposed to have been placed upon all temples."

The "Young Architect" will find the projecting roof on both sides lends the best protection for his cob walls. My recollection is, that these were only white-washed, but my notes are silent. Let me advise the plastering to be as thin as may be. Your correspondent will find a full account of the working of pisé, by my friend Mr. Cresy, in a little work just published by Ridgway, "Cottages of Agricultural Labourers."*—I am, Sir, &c.,

York, July, 1847. AN OLD ARCHITECT.

Miscellanea.

A MODERN MIRACLE!—Shakspeare read "sermons in stones," but we doubt whether he ever dreamt of deriving a *rope* from the same source. And yet, if a "sermon," why not a "long yarn?" Modern ingenuity has not found it a thing impossible. A rope, nearly three miles long, now lies on the verge of the borough of Gateshead, which was the other day a stone in the bowels of the earth. Smelted, the stone yielded iron. The iron was converted into wire. The wire was brought to the wire-rope manufactory of R. S. Newall & Co., at the Teams, near Gateshead, and there twisted into a line 4,660 yards long! It is, we believe, the stoutest rope of the kind that was ever made. It weighs 20 tons 5 hundredweights, and will cost the purchasers upwards of 1,134*l.* It is intended for the incline on the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway, near the latter city. A rope of hemp, of equal strength, would weigh 33½ tons, and cost about 300*l.* more. It would also entail greater expense while in operation (owing to its greater weight) and would sooner wear out. Ropes of hemp, however, for some purposes, are superior to ropes of iron. The rope now lying at Messrs. Newall's is one of the greatest curiosities we have seen for some time. We were reminded whilst looking upon it of the boast of one of Shakspeare's fairy friends, that he could "put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes." Poor *Puck*, we thought, would have been in a sad pucker, if these twenty tons of iron rope had been handed over to him for a beginning! —*Gateshead Observer.*

* A useful brochure, "published with the hope that it may aid in promoting the comfort and the prosperity of the invaluable labourers of our country."—ED.

For more information on OCR and PDF Compression go to our website